



October 10, 2023

Dear RPS Community,

We are saddened and upset by the news of the Hamas attack on innocent civilians in Israel last weekend. We understand that such violent events can have a significant effect on our students and their families, and our thoughts are with all of you who may be concerned for family and friends.

As many in our community struggle with the frightening images and descriptions of what is happening, we understand that parents/caregivers may have questions about how to respond to their students.

Resources are available online and [on the RPS website](#). Keep in mind that each child will respond differently in a given situation. Some may have no reaction at all and this is perfectly normal. However, if your student is experiencing some concerns or anxiety, their principal, teacher, school counselors and Child Study Team members are available to you and them for additional information and support.

Again, we send our heartfelt wishes to those affected by this tragedy and are here to support you and your student as the events continue to unfold. If you have questions, please contact your building principal or contact me directly.

Regards,

Mark Schwarz

Additional Resources (for website)



To help you navigate some of these difficult conversations, we are sharing some helpful resources for you and your family.

Key points to consider:

1. Limit your student's exposure to media coverage of the event
2. Try not to transfer your anxieties to your student
3. Always keep in mind your student's developmental level and capacity for understanding
4. Provide reassurance about safety and security
5. Give honest, factual answers to questions
6. Answer only the question you are asked; do not elaborate
7. Allow your student to verbally or actively process the event
 - a. Drawing pictures, writing
 - b. Opportunities to ask questions, give respectful and honest answers
8. Allow your student to express feelings
9. Your student may need to repeat certain things or ask the same questions over and over
10. As adults, we have feelings as well. Modeling that capacity is healthy.
11. Provide lots of reassurance and validation of what your student is feeling
12. Support your student's thoughts and respond to concerns, however, maintain expectations for appropriate behavior
13. Continue to offer structure, provide a stable environment and predictable schedule

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-families-and-educators>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/supporting-youth-affected-by-the-war-in-ukraine-tips-for-parents>

· [Age-by-Age Guide to Getting Your Child to Talk](#)



- [Anxiety and Depression in Children](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists Resources](#)
- Anxiety and Children
 - [Anxiety - Pediatric Mental Health Minute Series](#)
 - [Pediatric Generalized Anxiety](#)
 - [Helping Kids with Anxiety](#)
 - [Bergen County Mental Health Resources Guide](#)
 - [Mental Health](#)
 - [Mental Health Resources - List](#)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network Resources

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has developed resources to help children, families, educators, and communities navigate what they are seeing and hearing, acknowledge their feelings, and find ways to cope together.

These resources include:

- [Talking to Children about the Shooting](#)
- [Helping Youth After a Community Trauma: Tips for Educators \(En Español\)](#)
- [Talking to Children: When Scary Things Happen \(En Español\)](#)
- [Talking to Teens about Violence \(En Español\)](#)
- [Tips for Talking to Students about Violence](#)
- [Coping After Mass Violence: For Adults](#)
- [For Teens: Coping After Mass Violence\(En Español\)](#)
 - [Helping School-Age Children with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers \(En Español\)](#)
 - [Helping Teens with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers\(En Español\)](#)
 - [Helping Young Children with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers \(En Español\)](#)



- [Guiding Adults in Talking to Children about Death and Attending Services](#)
- [After a Crisis: Helping Young Children Heal](#)
- [Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#)
- [Once I Was Very Very Scared](#) – children’s book for young children
- [After the Injury](#)—website for families with injured children
- [Health Care Toolbox](#)—website for pediatric health providers working with injured children
- [Pause-Reset-Nourish \(PRN\) to Promote Wellbeing \(En Español\)](#) (for responders)

Psychological First Aid

The NCTSN also has resources for responders on [Psychological First Aid](#) (PFA; [En Español](#)). PFA is an early intervention to support children, adolescents, adults, and families impacted by these types of events. [PFA Mobile](#) and the [PFA Wallet Card \(En Español\)](#) provide a quick reminder of the core actions. The [PFA online training](#) course is also available at the NCTSN Learning Center.

Additional PFA resources for schools include:

- [Psychological First Aid for Schools](#) (PFA-S) – Field operations guide
- [Providing PFA-S: For Health-Related Professionals](#)
- [Providing PFA-S: For Principals and Administrators](#)
- [Providing PFA-S: For School Support Staff](#)
- [Providing PFA-S: For Teachers](#)

From the National Mass Violence and Victimization Resource Center

- [Transcend](#) (mobile app to assist with recovery after mass violence)
- [Rebuild your Community: Resources for Community Leaders](#)
- [Media Guidelines for Homicide Family Survivors](#)
- [Timeline of Activities to Promote Mental Health Recovery](#)
- [Self-Help: Resources for Survivors](#)



RIDGEWOOD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark Schwarz
Superintendent of Schools
Ridgewood Public Schools
mschwarz@ridgewood.k12.nj.us
201-670-2700

- [E-learning Courses: Trainings for Clinicians](#)
- [Resources for Victim Assistance Professionals](#)